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## WOMAN SUFFRAGE AND THE LIQUOR TRAFFIC

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The equal suffrage movement has suffered from involuntary entanglement with contemporary reforms. In vain has it pleaded to be judged on its own merits. It has had to carry not only its own impedimenta but the prejudices and antagonisms belonging to other reforms. This condition is inevitable for the reason that suffrage is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is a force which will necessarily have reactions upon many public questions. So those who are vitally interested in these questions calculate the probable effect of the woman's vote upon them and allegiance or antagonism to woman suffrage depends more upon the result of such calculations than upon the abstract phases of justice and right.

The easiest form of argument is the prophetic. Woman suffrage will do this and bring that—either chaos or the millennium, according to the principles or prejudices of the prophet. The largest volume of prophecy respecting this proposed innovation has been on the effect of woman suffrage upon the liquor traffic. Many consider the temperance and woman suffrage movements as practically identical. Perhaps this connection started in the earliest years of the woman's rights movement when the battle for a woman's right to speak in public and to exercise all the rights of a delegate in deliberative assemblies was fought out upon the anti-slavery and the temperance society platforms. It was in a national temperance convention that Rev. Antoinette Brown Blackwell held her own for hours while the male delegates stormily proceeded through howls, jeers, and unseemly epithets to a favorable vote on her right to speak. Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Mary A. Livermore and others of the pioneer suffragists divided their early activities among the woman's rights, the abolition, and the temperance movements. There is evidence, however, that those contemporary movements felt the embarrassment of woman's public support and there were those who preferred that these good causes should fail without

woman's help rather than win with it. They were reluctant to receive women members into full fellowship.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was organized a quarter of a century after the first woman's rights convention and was silent on the suffrage question for a number of years. Then Miss Anthony converted Miss Willard to suffrage, and she immediately grasped the idea of the expediency of the woman's ballot as a necessary "weapon for home protection." She carried through the next national convention an endorsement which the W. C. T. U. has steadily maintained, exerting a great educational influence in many states and nations.

But long before temperance organizations had seen the potentialities of the woman vote, the saloon men were fearing woman's governmental power. The first campaign to secure enlarged political power for woman was contested by the liquor forces and the last one will be.

The suffrage associations have studiously kept aloof from temperance organization endorsements. They have held that the suffrage question should be decided upon its own merits. They have been willing to receive into membership those persons who believe in woman's right to the ballot, irrespective of their views on any other question. They have claimed for each woman citizen the right to exercise her vote according to her own judgment. In the first suffrage campaigns the hostility of the saloons was less openly displayed and the suffrage leaders tried to walk softly around the sleeping lions. The public aid of known temperance sympathizers was frequently discouraged for fear the suffrage amendment might be compromised. But during the past few years the gauntlet has so repeatedly been thrown down by these forces that the suffragists now know the futility of hoping to gain either the support or the cessation of hostilities of those who profit in any financial or political manner from the liquor traffic. The atmosphere has been cleared and the lines drawn. We now know that the center and strength of the anti-woman suffrage army are the liquor traffic and its vicious allies.

The organs of "the trade" devote regularly a considerable portion of their space to anti-suffrage editorials, framed scare-head posters, scurrilous articles, poems and cartoons. These are the only anti-suffrage papers whose opposition remains on the low planes of

coarse abuse which characterized many more respectable journals in the forties and fifties.

The organ of the Wisconsin Retail Liquor Dealers Association, *Progress*, congratulating itself on its part in the defeat of the equal suffrage amendment in Wisconsin in 1912, says half apologetically:

During the recent campaign, *Progress* has been accused of using offensive methods in its warfare. It should be understood that what *Progress* did was for the benefit of its trade—it was educational—nothing more. A few “high-brow journalists” and a “knocker” tried to put *Progress* in a bad light. But the vote on suffrage in Wisconsin tells the story, and it also tells of the influence of *Progress*.

The Wisconsin suffragists arose from this defeat, brought about through all unhallowed means, and appeared promptly the following January at the legislature asking re-submission of this question. They secured a favorable vote in spite of the activity of the liquor lobby. Then Governor McGovern vetoed the bill.

At a public hearing on this bill the lobby of the “German-American Alliance” was represented by Mr. Robert Wild and Mr. Flanders of Milwaukee. *The Wisconsin State Journal* (Madison) edited by Richard Lloyd Jones, on March 23, 1913, says editorially that “by a slip of the tongue,” when he meant to say 90,000 votes, Mr. Flanders came dangerously near the truth when he said that equal suffrage was defeated in Wisconsin by \$90,000.

Evidence is available that enormous sums of money are collected and spent by “the trade” to defeat suffrage bills and amendments. “Woman suffrage means prohibition” is the slogan of these prophets of fear. In all the recent campaigns the cities have been placarded with the sentiment “A vote for woman suffrage is a vote for prohibition” but in the “dry” rural districts quantities of leaflets are circulated urging farmers to vote against suffrage because of the failure of women to abolish saloons in the suffrage states.

After the defeat of the suffrage amendment in Michigan in the spring of 1913 the Michigan Equal Suffrage Association issued a statement in which they declared that:

Every “wet” newspaper in the state opposed equal suffrage. Every “wet” politician opposed equal suffrage. Every saloon and liquor dealers’ organization opposed equal suffrage. Every brewer and liquor dealer in the state opposed equal suffrage. The suffragists of Michigan have never made the question a “wet and dry” issue, but the wets have made suffrage an issue and we know that no one factor could have defeated us except the liquor forces.

This analysis was backed up by editorial comment of many leading Michigan papers. *The Detroit Journal* said:

The fight was made throughout the state by the liquor interests. They are the only opponents of suffrage who have any object in making an intense campaign. They made it an intense and thorough campaign.

*The Lansing State Journal* said:

Another reason for the defeat of suffrage may be found in the fight which the liquor interests made against it. With unlimited means at their command, they flooded Michigan with misleading literature and under the cloak of the anti-suffrage association, composed of well-known Michigan citizens, worked deadly harm.

*The Kalamazoo Gazette* said:

Last fall local liquor dealers vigorously denied any connection with the fight against the women, but this spring they all but openly boasted of it. There is no doubt but that thousands of dollars were sent into the state by outside liquor organizations and it was this "barrel of slush" that, more than any other one thing, encompassed the undoing of the suffragists of Michigan and sent them down to bitter defeat.

*The Port Huron Times-Herald* said:

There is no denying the fact that the liquor interests took a prominent part in the defeat of suffrage. The saloon men saw state wide prohibition staring them in the face if the suffrage movement was successful in Michigan. They worked openly against it and contributed largely to its defeat.

The opposition of the liquor forces is not gauged by the number of women actively engaged in temperance work. That number is still comparatively small. It takes no comfort from the fact that suffrage associations are non-partisan on all questions except suffrage. It would fear and fight off the enfranchisement of women if every temperance organization were to disband today. Therein it unconsciously pays its high tribute to womanhood and confesses its own lack of moral defense. Perhaps needless space has been taken to prove a condition so well known today as to need no citations. The forces of evil fear women's vote.

There are other men who prophesy an end to the saloon after the citizen mothers have a chance to meet it with equal weapons. They are the men who are perplexed by their own mistakes in government; men who distrust their own strength; men who reverence and believe in the nobility of women and who believe that the un-

tapped reservoirs of woman's political ideals and energies contain vast redemptive forces. All such prophets of hope might here be allowed to speak through the mediumship of Jack London, who "rode down the valley of the moon all a-jingle" and voted for the equal suffrage of California women.

I voted that women might vote because I knew that they, the wives and mothers of the race, would vote John Barleycorn out of existence and back into the historical limbo of our vanished customs of savagery. The women are the true conservators of the race. Men are the wastrels, the adventure lovers and gamblers, and in the end it is by their women that they are saved. The women know. They have paid an incalculable price of sweat and tears for man's use of alcohol. Ever zealous for the race, they will legislate for babes of boys yet to be born.

Now what have the women in the suffrage states and countries done to justify the fears of the enemy and the faith of the idealists? Does woman suffrage mean prohibition? A casual review of the actual accomplishments in legislation against the saloon might seem to give little comfort to reformers, while at the same time their tendencies are ominous enough to keep the liquor hosts in hot water. Strangely enough, women have moved more cautiously as to any radical or advanced legislation on this question than in a score of other achievements in new social legislation.

There are several good reasons for this, as the student of the question will find. First, equal suffrage was granted in new countries where women are still greatly in the minority, where customs and habits were more fluid, less established and reflected the androcentric ideals of the mining camp. With the gallantry and sense of a square deal which distinguish the best of primitive civilization, the western men gave women the ballot, and have coöperated with them in securing a mass of needed social legislation. But there has been a natural tendency for them to hold on, by sheer power of numbers, to institutions peculiarly masculine, to the domination of the parties and offices. With a commendable common sense, these enfranchised women chose the line of least resistance and have spent these years of their novitiate in perfecting the educational system, working out new schemes of correction and charity, safeguarding public health and coping with civic problems. They have thus made a record which will be a splendid background for more vital reform work.

Another fact should be remembered and that is that the saloon problem is not so easy of solution as the question of punishment for juvenile offenders, or the pure food law. The enemies of the saloon are of many minds as to how its evils can be eradicated or reduced to a minimum. They split upon methods. So with the prevailing uncertainty and confusion among conscientious anti-saloon workers it is not surprising that a minority sex in a man-made state should register somewhat of that indecision. But the testimony of reliable people in the western states is to the effect that the efforts to curb saloon power have been put forth largely by women and that here as everywhere the majority of women are against the saloon.

Colorado, California, Oregon and Washington are now in the midst of campaigns for state-wide prohibition and the work of securing the signatures for the referendum is credited largely to women. In Washington this movement has secured the endorsement of the State Federation of Women's Clubs representing 10,000 women, the Mothers' Congress, the Parent Teachers' Association, and the Washington Woman's Legislative League. Wyoming has passed a law prohibiting saloons outside incorporated towns, which automatically made ninety per cent of the area of the state no-license. In 1913 five of the cities excluded saloons by action of the city councils. They have enacted a stringent Sunday closing law. Idaho and Utah have been using the local option law as blotters. Idaho has twenty-one of her thirty-three counties dry, and only about 195 saloons. In the last local option election in Utah, 82 out of 110 cities voting went dry. Sixteen of the wet towns are mining camps. Both these states are preparing for prohibition amendment campaigns in 1915.

Hon. Edward Taylor of Colorado in an address in Congress made the statement that when women were given the vote in Colorado there were only three no-license towns. Fifty-four per cent of the population of Colorado now live in dry territory. Doubtless this number would have been increased during the years if women had remained unenfranchised, but their direct influence has been more effective. In California, Oregon and Washington recent elections have registered sweeping no-license victories. In Washington two dry towns became wet, one by three votes, while 160 wet towns changed to dry and three counties became entirely dry.

In other suffrage countries about the same record has been made. The New Zealand women have undoubtedly worked harder

to secure prohibition than the women of other countries, and the last three elections have shown great advances in the vote against the license system. However, three-fifths of all the votes cast are necessary to carry the measure. This makes it a difficult task. Here, also, women are in the minority, yet if all women had voted favorably it might have been carried. Prohibition in Iceland followed too closely upon the victory for woman suffrage to claim any considerable credit for women. The same might be said of Finland where a prohibition measure passed the first session of the Finnish Diet. Women were members of that body and a woman member introduced the same measure in the second Diet but neither time has it secured the approval of the Czar.

The most notable records of women's opinions on the saloon question have been registered in Illinois. There are reasons why this record is most indicative of women's ultimate decision upon this question. In the first place, Illinois is the oldest, the most populous, and the most eastern of all the suffrage states. Men and women are more nearly equal in numbers. Ideals and moral standards are more developed, more conventional, than in the newer states. There have been years of education on all phases of the saloon problem. Again, the organizations of women are large, well trained and they coöperate with one another. The Illinois women have a limited suffrage and because they cannot vote for all officials of any election, separate ballots and ballot-boxes become necessary. Therefore, for statistical purposes, these elections will take precedence over more important ones in other states.

The surprising results of the first elections in Illinois become all the more remarkable when one considers that the Illinois suffrage victory was the result of the active work of comparatively few women during those years in which it was being promoted. In the nine states where constitutions have been amended it was the educational work of the majority of women which encouraged the majority of men to grant equal suffrage. The women who worked were naturally keen to use the vote. In Illinois masses of women scarcely knew of the efforts of the lobbyists and organizers who were securing a legislative victory. Thousands of them had not contributed a dollar, organized a meeting or written a letter to secure their suffrage. Would they use it now that it had been dropped into their laps? That was the question the whole state was asking.



No more fortunate thing could have happened than that the first elections under this new law, which had come so easy, should have been on what appealed to women as a moral issue. The suffrage law went into effect July 1, 1913. During that month a number of special elections had been called in scattering precincts throughout the state. On July 22 two small cities, Carpenterville and Benton, voted on the licensing of saloons. Although the time was short the towns were thoroughly organized and in Benton more women voted than men, four hundred and nineteen voting dry and fourteen wet.

Three important local option elections have been held since Illinois women were enfranchised. On November 4, 1913, sixteen counties in the southern part of the state voted. On April 7 the townships in the eighty-five counties which are under township organization held their elections and the city elections followed on April 21. As a result of these elections nearly 1,200 saloons were voted out of 260 townships, and twenty-two counties were made entirely dry. This brings the total number of dry counties up to fifty-two in the state. In not a single precinct did territory previously dry change its policy. The result would have been different in over a hundred townships if the women's vote had been thrown out. Over sixty-five per cent of the women voting at these elections recorded their votes against the saloon.

The defeated liquor men instituted suits in many of these counties to have the women's vote declared unconstitutional. These cases were lost in every county court. An appeal to the supreme court of the state resulted in a decision handed down June 13, 1914, upholding the constitutionality of the suffrage law. In about a dozen precincts in these elections in Illinois a majority of women voted for saloons. Springfield, Quincy, Galena, Savanna and Joliet were the only cities making this unenviable record.

In Jacksonville thirty-six hundred of the four thousand eligible women voted. This is a conservative city where both suffrage and temperance organizations had always been small. Of the thirty-six hundred women voting only six hundred and fifty-four voted for the saloon. In Galesburg, 90 per cent of the women's vote was dry and many of the smaller towns crowded close to the record of Atlanta, which registered 96 per cent dry. In Virginia, a county seat town, not a single woman's vote was cast for the saloon. The government's internal revenue on special spirit tax has been reduced \$15,000 since these elections.

The striking feature of these first elections was the character of the women who led in the preliminary work. Most of them were club leaders and prominent local women, few of whom had been enrolled in either suffrage or temperance organizations. But finding themselves possessed of the ballot, and responding to the civic responsibility of making their towns safer and cleaner, they threw themselves into the work of educating the masses of women in election technique and in organizing to secure the largest possible vote of the women. This experience has extended the bounds of their character so that never again can they be indifferent to these two reforms. This spiritual quickening has been the most important phase of the Illinois suffrage victory.

Two other events which have taken place in Illinois since suffrage was granted might be recorded as the truest measure of woman's mind on the liquor question. Their significance is greater than the effects of the woman vote on temperance in the suffrage states up to the present time. I refer to the almost unanimous endorsement of prohibition by the Illinois and the General Federations of Women's Clubs. Never before had such a proposition been made. Temperance has been more tabooed in club circles than suffrage. But when the 563 delegates at the Illinois federation convention heard the resolution read that,

WHEREAS, the public saloon is the cause of much sin and want among our people, and

WHEREAS, the state legislature has placed within our hands the means by which we can better conditions in this state,

*Be it Resolved*, That the delegates of the Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs place ourselves on record as opposed to the traffic in intoxicating beverages and urge their sisters of the state to use every possible opportunity at the ballot boxes to add Illinois to the list of dry states.

the resentment which seemed to have been smouldering in every woman's breast against this racial enemy burst into flame and only five women had the spirit to stand against the motion!

Again in June, 1914, the greatest convention of seated delegates that Chicago has ever entertained, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, reached the summit of the mount of vision and declared for their own freedom. At once they began to see great duties in a new light and their official resolutions registered the high water mark of public conscience toward social ills.

Without one dissenting voice they declared that:

Since the liquor traffic is responsible for three-fourths of the crime, vice and misery in this country,

*Be it Resolved*, That the women of the General Federation place themselves on record as opposed to the liquor traffic and in favor of such federal or state laws as will tend to eradicate this evil.

Thus has the most important organization of American women worked back through the labyrinthian paths of vital statistics, records of hospital wards and insane asylums, epileptic colonies, criminal statistics, degeneracy, the social evil, poverty—back to the Minotaur at the center, who has controlled these pitiful trails of woe for the sons and daughters of the race.

Well may the liquor traffic fear the enfranchised woman when she has learned her power.